

Virginians Are First to Get William Henry Harrison Presidential \$1 Coins

February 16, 2009

CHARLES CITY, Va. – As the Nation paused to observe Presidents Day, the United States Mint launched the William Henry Harrison Presidential \$1 Coin in a ceremony today at the Berkeley Plantation, the former President’s home. Participants at the event were the first in the Nation to get the new \$1 coin, which goes into circulation on February 19.

“We honor William Henry Harrison today – our Nation’s ninth President,” United States Mint Deputy Director Andy Brunhart told the crowd.

The crowd watched as thousands of shiny, new William Henry Harrison Presidential \$1 Coins spilled onto a velvet cloth, officially launching the latest coin in the United States Mint’s Presidential \$1 Coin Program. Following the ceremony, each child 18 years old or younger received a newly minted \$1 coin, and adults exchanged their currency for rolls of the coin.

The obverse (heads side) of the William Henry Harrison Presidential \$1 Coin features a dramatic portrait of the former President by United States Mint Sculptor–Engraver Joe Menna. The inscription *IN GOD WE TRUST*—formerly featured on the edge of Presidential \$1 Coins—is now featured on the obverse. It is the first Presidential \$1 Coin to feature the inscription on the obverse.

The coin’s reverse (tails side), by United States Mint Sculptor–Engraver Don Everhart, features a striking image of the Statue of Liberty. Incused on the coin’s edge are the inscriptions *2009, E PLURIBUS UNUM* and the mintmark of origin (*P* or *D* for Philadelphia or Denver).

William Henry Harrison was born into a politically prominent family. His father, a three-term governor of Virginia, was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Following three years of college, Harrison’s father sent him to study medicine with a leading physician. Unenthusiastic about medicine, he instead pursued a military career after his father’s death. Harrison distinguished himself in the Battle of Tippecanoe against American Indians led by Shawnee chief Tecumseh—earning the nickname “Old Tippecanoe”—and in the War of 1812. During his Army career, Harrison also served as secretary of the Northwest Territory and governor of the Indiana Territory. He also served in the U.S. Senate, in the U.S. House of Representatives, in the Ohio State Senate, and as U.S. minister to Columbia.

In 1840, the Whig Party chose Harrison to run against incumbent President Martin Van Buren. “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too” (future President John Tyler was his vice presidential candidate) was the first slogan used in a presidential campaign. Harrison defeated Van Buren in a landslide, and at 68 years old, became the oldest president to serve in the office up to that point.

Former President Harrison served the shortest term in office of any president to date. He died of pneumonia about one month after giving the longest inaugural speech in history. He was the first president to die in office.

The Presidential \$1 Coin Act of 2005 requires the Secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue Presidential \$1 Coins to honor the United States Presidents in the order in which they served. Four new designs will be released annually. The William Henry Harrison Presidential \$1 Coin is the ninth coin in the program.

To view and download high-resolution images of the circulating William Henry Harrison \$1 Coin, go to: </news/image-library/news-image-gallery>

Background information on the Presidential \$1 Coin Program is available at </learn/coin-and-medal-programs/presidential-dollar-coin>

Lesson plans are available for download at www.usmint.gov/kids/.

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